CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1.   A method of configuring a hard copy output engine comprising:
activating a hot link; and
configuring the hard copy output engine using the activated hot link.

2.   The method of claim 1, wherein the configuration plug-in and
configuration data include data prepared by:
determining a make and model for the hard copy output engine; and
determining user thresholds for consumables associated with the hard
copy output engine.

3.   The method of claim 1, wherein downloading includes:
sending a first electronic message via the Internet to a website of a vendor
associated with the hard copy output engine; and
receiving a second electronic message including the hot link via the
Internet in response to the first message.

4.   The method of claim 1, wherein downloading includes:
sending a first electronic message via the Internet to a website of a vendor
associated with the hard copy output engine; and
receiving a second electronic message via the Internet in response to
sending, wherein sending and receiving include transmission across a firewall.

5.   The method of claim 1, wherein configuring includes setting a
threshold for an element chosen from a group consisting of: pigmentation material,
marking material, number of hours of operation and number of sheets of print media
consumed.

6.   The method of claim 1, wherein the hard copy output engine is
chosen from a group consisting of: facsimile machines, photocopiers and printers.

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7.   The method of claim 1, wherein configuring includes:

determining a make and model for the hard copy output engine;

determining a serial number for the hard copy output engine; and

determining user thresholds for consumables associated with the hard copy output engine.

8.   An article of manufacture comprising a computer usable medium having computer readable code embodied therein that is configured to cause a processor to:

activate a hot link; and

configure the hard copy output engine using the activated hot link.

9.   The article of manufacture of claim 8, wherein the computer readable code configured to cause the processor to configure the hard copy output engine further includes computer readable code configured to cause the processor to:

determine a make and model for the hard copy output engine; and

determine user thresholds for consumables associated with the hard copy output engine, and wherein the computer readable code configured to cause the processor to configure comprises computer readable code configured to cause the processor to configure the hard copy output engine via an embedded web server contained in the hard copy output engine using the activated hot link.

10.   The article of manufacture of claim 8, wherein the computer readable code configured to cause the processor to download data further includes computer readable code configured to cause the processor to:

send a first electronic message across a firewall via the Internet to a website of a vendor associated with the hard copy output engine; and

receive a second electronic message across the firewall via the Internet in response to the first electronic message.

11.   The article of manufacture of claim 8, wherein the computer readable code configured to cause the processor to download data further includes computer readable code configured to cause the processor to:

send a first electronic message across a firewall via the Internet to a website of a vendor associated with the hard copy output engine; and

receive a second electronic message across a firewall via the Internet in response to the first electronic message.

12.   The article of manufacture of claim 8, wherein the computer readable code configured to cause the processor to configure the hard copy output engine includes computer readable code configured to cause the processor to configure the hard copy output engine using the downloaded data to set a threshold for an element chosen from a group consisting of: pigmentation material, marking material, number of hours of operation and number of sheets of print media consumed.

13.   The article of manufacture of claim 8, wherein the computer readable code configured to cause the processor to configure the hard copy output engine includes computer readable code configured to cause the processor to configure a hard copy output engine chosen from a group consisting of: facsimile machines, photocopiers and printers.

14.   The article of manufacture of claim 8, wherein the computer readable code configured to cause the processor to configure the hard copy output engine further includes computer readable code configured to cause the processor to:

determine a make and model for the hard copy output engine;

determine a serial number for the hard copy output engine; and

determine user thresholds for consumables associated with the hard copy output engine.

15.   A computer implemented control system for a hard copy output engine, the system comprising:

    memory configured to store a software module; and

    processing circuitry configured to employ the software module to:

        activate a hot link; and

        configure the hard copy output engine using the activated hot link.

16.   The computer implemented control system of claim 15, wherein the processing circuitry configured to employ the software module to configure comprises processing circuitry configured to employ the software module to:

    determine a make and model for the hard copy output engine; and

    determine user thresholds for consumables associated with the hard copy output engine, and wherein the processing circuitry configured to employ the software module to configure comprises processing circuitry configured to employ the software module to configure the hard copy output engine via an embedded web server contained in the hard copy output engine using the activated hot link.

17.   The computer implemented control system of claim 15, wherein the processing circuitry configured to employ the software module to configure includes processing circuitry configured to employ the software module to configure the hard copy output engine using the downloaded data to set a threshold for an element chosen from a group consisting of: pigmentation material, marking material, number of hours of operation and number of sheets of print media consumed.

18.   The computer implemented control system of claim 15, wherein the processing circuitry configured to employ the software module further includes processing circuitry configured to employ the software module to:

    send a first electronic message across a firewall via the Internet to a website of a vendor associated with the hard copy output engine; and

    receive a second electronic message across the firewall via the Internet in response to the first electronic message.

19.   The computer implemented control system of claim 15, wherein the hard copy output engine is chosen from a group consisting of: facsimile machines, photocopiers and printers.

20.   The computer implemented control system of claim 15, wherein the processing circuitry configured to employ the software module further comprises processing circuitry configured to employ the software module to:

determine a make and model for the hard copy output engine;

determine a serial number for the hard copy output engine; and

determine user thresholds for consumables associated with the hard copy output engine.

21.   A computer instruction signal embodied in a carrier wave carrying instructions that when executed by a processor cause the processor to:

activate a hot link; and

configure the hard copy output engine using the activated hot link.

22.   The computer instruction signal of claim 21, wherein the computer instruction signal embodied in the carrier wave carrying instructions that cause the processor to configure the hard copy output engine further includes a computer instruction signal embodied in the carrier wave carrying instructions that cause the processor to:

determine a make and model for the hard copy output engine; and

determine user thresholds for consumables associated with the hard copy output engine, and wherein the computer instruction signal embodied in the carrier wave carrying instructions that cause the processor to configure comprises a computer instruction signal configured to cause the processor to configure the hard copy output engine via an embedded web server contained in the hard copy output engine using the activated hot link.

23.   The computer instruction signal of claim 21, wherein the computer instruction signal embodied in the carrier wave carrying instructions that cause the processor to download data further includes a computer instruction signal embodied in the carrier wave carrying instructions that cause the processor to:

send a first electronic message across a firewall via the Internet to a website of a vendor associated with the hard copy output engine; and

receive a second electronic message across the firewall via the Internet in response to the first electronic message.

24.   The computer instruction signal of claim 21, wherein the computer instruction signal embodied in the carrier wave carrying instructions that cause the processor to download data further includes a computer instruction signal embodied in the carrier wave carrying instructions that cause the processor to:

send a first electronic message across a firewall via the Internet to a website of a vendor associated with the hard copy output engine; and

receive a second electronic message across a firewall via the Internet in response to the first electronic message.

25.   The computer instruction signal of claim 21, wherein the computer instruction signal embodied in the carrier wave carrying instructions that cause the processor to configure the hard copy output engine includes a computer instruction signal embodied in the carrier wave carrying instructions that cause the processor to configure the hard copy output engine using the downloaded data to set a threshold for an element chosen from a group consisting of: pigmentation material, marking material, number of hours of operation and number of sheets of print media consumed.

26.   The computer instruction signal of claim 21, wherein the computer instruction signal embodied in the carrier wave carrying instructions that cause the processor to configure the hard copy output engine includes a computer instruction signal embodied in the carrier wave carrying instructions that cause the processor to configure a hard copy output engine chosen from a group consisting of: facsimile machines, photocopiers and printers.

27.   The computer instruction signal of claim 21, wherein the computer instruction signal embodied in the carrier wave carrying instructions that cause the processor to configure the hard copy output engine further includes a computer instruction signal embodied in the carrier wave carrying instructions that cause the processor to:

determine a make and model for the hard copy output engine;

determine a serial number for the hard copy output engine; and

determine user thresholds for consumables associated with the hard copy output engine.